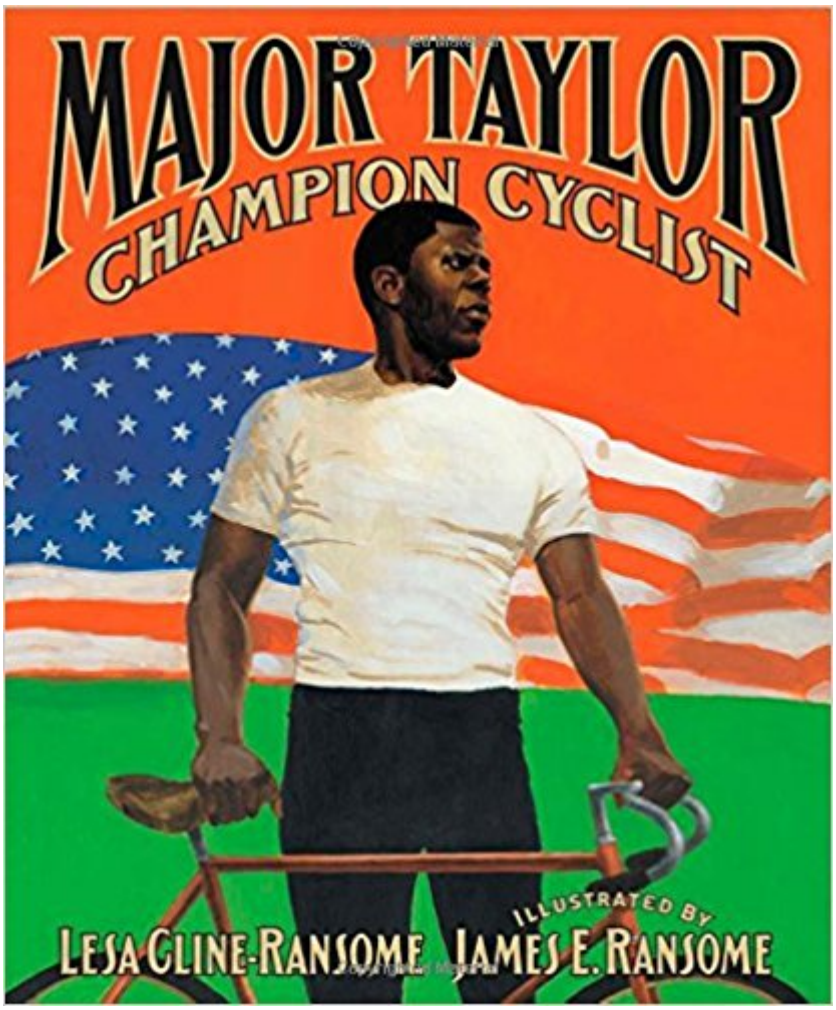
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Major Taylor, Champion Cyclist



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Synopsis

Marshall Taylor could ride his bike forward, backward, even perched on the handlebars. When his stunts landed him a job at the famous Indiana bike shop Hay and Willits, folks were amazed that a thirteen-year-old black boy in 1891 could be such a crackerjack cyclist. How little Marshall Taylor -- through dedication, undeniable talent, and daring speed -- transformed himself into the extraordinary Major Taylor is chronicled in this inspiring biography. Here is the story of a kid who turned pro at the age of eighteen, went on to win the world championship title just three years later, and battled racism and the odds to become a true American hero.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: AD1020L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 40 pages

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Average Customer Review: 3.8 out of 5 stars 3 customer reviews

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Age Range: 6 - 10 years

Grade Level: 1 - 5

Customer Reviews

Grade 2-4--A picture-book biography of Marshall Taylor, an African American who became a great bicycle racer. Taylor grew up in Indianapolis, taught himself stunts on his bicycle, and won the first race he entered, in 1891, at age 13. He went on to achieve international fame in a segregated sport. (In this country, he was allowed to compete only because he'd been admitted to the League of American Wheelmen before they voted to bar blacks from membership.) He found a greater level of acceptance in France, and the account of his victory over the French champion Edmond Jacquelin provides the book with its climax. An afterword is frank about the difficulties the athlete encountered after retiring from racing; he died at the age of 53 and was buried in a pauper's grave near Chicago.

Overall, the text is smoothly written and greatly enhanced by Ransome’s vivid and accomplished paintings. Not quite as long as Cline-Ransome and Ransome’s Satchel Paige (S & S, 2000), this book hits only a few high notes in Taylor’s life. Mary Scioscia’s Bicycle Rider(Harper & Row, 1983; o.p.), illustrated by Ed Young, is a wonderful book for slightly older readers, but focuses only on Taylor’s first victory. Useful for reports as well as enjoyable for leisure reading, this attractive book should find a home in most collections.--Lauralyn Persson, Wilmette Public Library, IL Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Gr. 2-4, younger for reading aloud. African American cyclist Major Taylor, 1899 World Cycling champion, was as famous for the color of his skin as he was for his indomitability on the racetrack. This account covers Taylor’s transformation from a kid who loved to ride, "aware only of the wind against his face and the road he left behind," into an internationally known athlete. His story bears all the elements of a traditional sports tale, complete with a climactic showdown between rivals and a triumphant ending. Yet the theme of racism looms large, from the white bike-shop owner who treats 13-year-old Taylor as a publicity gimmick to the white competitors who "boxed him out" during races. Cline-Ransome’s storytelling is less smooth and sprightly than it was in Satchel Paige (2000), but her husband’s arresting oil paintings capture the beauty of an athlete in peak condition, and, like the similarly stark compositions of Edward Hopper, express bitter emotions simmering under the surface. A thoughtful afterword puts Taylor’s career into grim perspective: he died a pauper, his former glory all but forgotten. Jennifer MattsonCopyright Ã Â© American Library Association. All rights reserved

I’m a teacher and wanted to use this book in my classroom, but I don’t want to use it unless I have time to have a language discussion about the historical use of the word "negro." Inspirational story, but I wish there was a more culturally sensitive, modern telling of Major Taylor’s story.

I’d never heard of Major Taylor. Have you ever heard of Major Taylor? Possibly, since you’ve come to look up reviews of this book. Now there are a lot of African American greats out there that have, for one reason or another, sunk into relative obscurity. I don’t think I’m amiss in saying that Major Taylor is one of those greats. This is the man who won the 1899 World Championship title in America and made a successful European tour of 1901, yet died a pauper’s death. Now at last there is a proper book commemorating his life and times.Born in 1878, Marshall Walter Taylor (later to earn himself the nickname of "Major") led a surprisingly good life for a black man in the late

nineteenth century. Belonging to a household that educated him and gave him his own bicycle, he quickly learned to do a variety of tricks on it. When the chance to race came along, Taylor quickly started earning himself a variety of accolades. Just as important as the races he won, however, were the ways in which he dealt with the open racism and poor treatment of other cyclists. Taylor was patient and a winner. His mantra, "I simply ride away".The book itself has a couple flaws here and there that I found it hard to get around. The story of Taylor's life really take a wonderful turn when he joins up with the racer Louis "Birdie" Munger. Yet no picture of Birdie, important as he is, ever pops up. Also, the book culminates with a huge race between Major Taylor and the already established French champion. But try as I might to find out what the name (and significance) of this race was, I came up short. The race, oddly enough, is never named. In the end, the appeal of the book may or may not be all that great on the part of kids. Some may be interested in a bicycling champion that began by doing bike stunts. Some may not. The book is followed by a quick note at the end of what the rest of Taylor's life led to. It is not a particularly happy ending (he separated with his family, died a pauper's death, and was buried in an unnamed grave until exhumed and placed in a better spot). Just the same, it reflects on what Taylor meant to the rest of the world and what he stood for. Though this is not the most thrilling book in the world, it's a useful one and serves its purpose as well as it can.

Lance Armstrong dominates today's Grand Prix cycle races, but Marshall Taylor dominated the late 1800's. This beautifully illustrated book shares the life of this extraordinary African-American athlete fondly acknowledged as "Major." He became a World Champion in 1899 because of his proficiency with a bike. His competitive spirit and courage paved the way for those other fearless African-American Athletes, Jack Johnson, Jesse Owens, Josh Gibson, Satchel Paige and Jackie Robinson who would follow and excel, in their time, in other sports. This is an excellent read. Highly recommended.

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